



Adjacent to the lower level of AIE, Quala Care Preschool has been serving families for over 39 years. The experienced staff is uniquely focused on education through a family-style approach. Many of our teachers, as well as several alumni, have enrolled their children in this spacious facility that also boasts a large well-equipped outdoor activity area. For more information, give them a call.

(502)267-6187

If you have not had the opportunity to check it out, AIE now has a school Facebook and Instagram page. We hope to use these as great tools to reach more families and spread the word about our school. If you have a Facebook or Instagram account, we would greatly appreciate you "liking" our page and sharing it with your friends. Check out our social media handles below.



AIECougars



Cougar Tracks is a publication of the Academy for Individual Excellence. For information about AIE and for archived editions of Cougar Tracks, go to

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Alumni Updates

Last September, **Kevin Tobin '16**, moved to Logansport Indiana and started as a Vehicle Development Engineer with BraunAbility, a producer of wheelchair accessible vehicles. In December, he graduated from Clemson University with his master's degree in Automotive Engineering.

Joshua Hindman '13, his wife Marissa, and their son Parker James Hindman reside in Bedford, Indiana. He is employed with the Indiana Department of Child Services.





Brodie Hume '22 is

working at UPS. He has been there for 9 months and has already received Employee of the Month twice for his Wing! When not working at UPS, he loves working out, driving around, and being with friends.

Daniel Frank '17 was happy to share that he has a new position as an Animal Keeper at the Smithsonian National Zoo in Washington DC!



Mandy Hall '99 said, "This is the 10th summer we've run our little produce business with our boys. It's grown and changed a lot, just like the boys have. Ruben and Sebastian are dual enrolled at the local college. Eli is a freshman in high-school, and Oliver is in 7th grade. Everything everyone ever tells you about how quickly the time goes by could not be truer. Can't believe we've got three teenagers already, with a fourth come January."

Kim Mikesell '13 said, "**Dean Mikesell '13** and I are starting our 2nd full year working at the school. Our daughter is continuing this year in the preschool program. We are really enjoying working at the school we both graduated from, as well as having our daughter with us every day. It is truly amazing to work with family and friends that love and support you so much."

Grant Combs '13 has served with LMPD for almost six years. He is still in the 3rd division. Grant serves on the Special Response Team (SRT) and has just become a training officer. His son Khan is almost two years old.



Dakota Smith '13 is the Sales Manager for Services Champions, which is an amazing accomplishment. He is the youngest HVAC Sales Manager. His wife of seven years, Bethany, is a stay at home mom to their one-year-old daughter, Penelope (Nelly). Nelly loves going to Disneyland and having fun in the pool.

From **Emily Gipe '05**, "Hi fellow AIE alumni! The past year has seen several changes in my life-one wonderful and the other very sad. To share the happy news; last June, I was blessed to move to Pillar/Apple Patch homes in Crestwood. They have 3-roommate homes in an inclusive neighborhood called Celebration Park. I have two great roommates - the sisters I never had! Pillar is a busy place with lots of activities and opportunities for new friends. I also volunteer at an assisted living place in Lagrange, helping orchestrate activities with the residents. Then my world came crashing in this past April. On April 6th, my brother Will passed away in his sleep from diabetes complications. His loss is so very hard. Please keep my mom and me in your prayers of peace."

Mark Ballou '22 is currently working with military recruiters in order to serve his home and country. Good luck Mark!

Evan Raby '16 is currently residing outside Madison, Wisconsin. He is working as a Music Engineer after having graduated in Engineering Physics from Xavier University in May 2021.

Josh Blandford '02 and Emily '03 celebrated their 17th wedding anniversary in May of this year. Josh is in his 18th year working for ADI as a Systems Design Supervisor. Emily will be starting her 15th year teaching middle school English as a second language for JCPS at Olmsted Academy South. They have two daughters: Ruthie (6) and Evie (4). Evie attends Quala Care Preschool. Ruthie graduated Kindergarten from AIE this last school year and is enjoying 1st grade.



This year has been bittersweet for **Brandon Savage '98** and family. They were blessed to have Daniel graduate from AIE, but had to say goodbye as he is now attending Freed Hardeman University in Henderson, TN. Jadon is a junior and Haylee started high school as a freshman this year. Brandon can't believe how fast time has flown, but has enjoyed watching them mature into the fine young people they have become. He is still the Commander of the LMPD Mounted Patrol. His horse, Justice, and he are loving their job and enjoy meeting people throughout the community. Leah is still with Baptist Health and enjoys her nursing job there. Their farm, "Sweet By and By Farm," is continuing to grow. They have been selling a lot of eggs this year and are expecting their 2nd alpaca baby this fall. He said, "We feel blessed for sure!"

Arden Stafford '11 and her husband, Colton, recently welcomed their son this past February. They are all adjusting well. They will be married for eight years this December. Arden has been working at First Savings Bank as a Mortgage Banking Accountant for almost four years. Colten is currently a Quality Control Manager at Heidelberg Materials and has worked for them going on eight years now. They live in Charlestown, IN with their three dogs and son, Everett.

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Kimberly (Birk) Lindell '03 has been married 13 years this year. She has twin 10-year-old, red-haired, girls.



Casey "Scherzinger" Lehr '03 said, "I can't believe our class celebrates 20 years this year since graduating from AIE! I have spent much of that time traveling, living, and working abroad as a licensed Massage Therapist, and finally laying roots in Indiana with my husband Scott, whom I celebrate 5 years of marriage with this year. Our son, Briar, just turned 3 and my bonus daughter Molly turns 15 this year. Being a mom has absolutely been my greatest accomplishment and I am loving every moment of it. I still occasionally practice massage therapy, but I am currently the Accounts Receivable Manager at Aldora Glass. We spend most of our free time outdoors keeping our riverfront homestead growing, overland camping, hiking and biking. I'm happy to report life has been and continues to be a big fun adventure over many mountains and oceans since graduating from AIE!"



Amanda Williams '99 is starting her 20th year teaching at AIE! She is also starting her 3rd year as Athletic Director. She said, "Our school has received five banners since I took over and at least one of my kids has been a part of each one. I also help coach basketball where both my girls play for me. My kids love playing sports for AIE. Matt and I just celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary in June and our oldest son Braden is a senior this year. We are looking forward to creating a lot of memories with him this school year. He has lived his ENTIRE life at AIE and it's almost over. Bittersweet for sure!"

Spencer Savage '08 wrote, "This past year has been a busy one in the Savage household. We bought a new house in Lebanon, TN in May of 2022 and are in the process of renovating and upgrading our new home. Our two boys, Callen and Cohen, turned 7 and 3 in May and are such a blessing to our lives. Brittany is homeschooling Callen, who is in the 2nd grade, and Cohen, who is in preschool. Brittany will also be celebrating her 10 year anniversary as a Disney Vacation Specialist and travel agent. Her business has really grown over the last two years. We are so proud of how hard she has worked to care for our family and build her business. I just began my third year as the Manager and Pharmacist In Charge at Gibbs Pharmacy, a local independent pharmacy in Lebanon, and continue to enjoy managing my staff and caring for the community we call home. We are all excited to see where the next phases of our life and careers will take our little family."

Joshua Dziatkowski '17 works for the Kentucky Department of Corrections.

Jill Wright '19 is continuing her education at Bellarmine University's College Connection Program. Her areas of study are Theatre, Photography, Public Speaking, and Graphic Arts. Since Jill graduated from AIE, she has been working at Mercy Academy as the Assistant to the Director of Theatre. Her favorite part of her job, (besides the wonderful people), is to teach the students theatre games. She also does clerical work; copying scripts, filing, and sorting props. In 2019, Jill was a presenter for The Stratera Arts Conference in Harlem, NY. It was a huge honor and an amazing experience. In July 2023, Jill was a



presenter at the NDSS National Conference in Orlando, FL. There, she taught theatre games and confidence building exercises. Jill attributes her huge confidence, in part, to the excellent foundation that she received from her amazing education at AIE. When not in school or working, Jill enjoys dancing, and Special Olympics softball, basketball, and cheerleading. Jill continues her local modeling and acting career and volunteers a great deal of time with her favorite charities.

Jeremy Goss '99 and his wife live in Taylorsville, KY with their two children, Berkeley & Bodhi. Ashley is an Office Manager & Client Support Specialist at Bluecap Financial and is the owner of *A Goss Wedding*, a wedding planning business. Jeremy is the head chef at the Kentucky State Police Academy. He has the pleasure of working alongside his brother, **Chris Goss ('03).** They aptly named their cafeteria "Goss House" after their late father, Dennis Goss, who was a retired major and the longest serving Academy Commander at KSP. Their daughter Berkeley started kindergarten at AIE this school year and they're looking forward to sending Bodhi to Quala Care this fall, once he turns 2!



KJ Lauck '13 was promoted last year to a supervisor position at Southeast Eye Specialists, where he's worked for four years now. His wife, Alana, is a Research Coordinator at Vanderbilt and had a study published this past winter in the Society for Critical Care Medicine. They have enjoyed a year-and-a-half in their home in south Nashville with their two cats, Louie and Salem.

Brandon Chasteen '98 said, "I'm doing well and "living the dream" as they say... forging ahead with the family biz (Bootleg Bar-B-Q) that celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2021 - quite an accomplishment for what started as a couple of buddies slinging BBQ from a little shack out in the country! This summer, Bootleg "went Hollywood" - we shut down for a few days so a film crew could use the restaurant to shoot scenes for "Queen of the Ring," a biopic about the first famous female wrestle. It was definitely an exciting "first" for us. We've been busy outside of work as well - I got married to Lilly (a Clinical Supervisor at Seven Counties) and we'll celebrate our second anniversary this fall. We also purchased a home closer to the BBQ (definitely doesn't feel "out in the country" these days) with more space for us to grow and dabble in gardening, painting, pottery, and anything else my multi-talented wife can dream up!!"



Coy and **Amber Hutchison '04** have been married since 2008. Their daughter Sofia (eleven years old) is in 6th grade at AIE this year and Hailey (eight years old) is in 3rd. They are excited to be a part of the AIE family again!



Lauren Paris '06 said, "I got married in 2016, had our first son in 2017, my daughter in 2020, and our newest addition, another baby boy, at the end of 2022. I'm beyond thrilled to be back at AIE as a Sponge room teacher. The Academy has always felt like home. In my time away, I knew this was where I wanted to be. My son started kindergarten this year at AIE, my daughter is attending the preschool, and my baby boy will be helping me out in the Sponge room. I'm so glad to be back, and for my children to have the experiences I had in this amazing school. It feels good to be home."

Becca Woosley '18 graduated from Hanover College in May of 2022 with a major in Early Education. She was hired by JCPS that fall to teach 2nd grade at Watterson Elementary. She has returned for her 2nd year. Becca got engaged this past February, and has a date set for September 28th of next year! Her fiancé, Tyler Dunbar, has accepted a position at AIE this year as a new 3rd/4th grade teacher and is working alongside Ms. Cheek! She is excited for him to have the opportunity to be a part of the AIE family and learn from the best as he begins his teaching career!

Jared Dye '13 has much to celebrate this year - his and Bri's 5th wedding anniversary, the 1st birthday of their son Enoch and his 4th year at Exacta Tile. Jared and his family worship with the Rome Church of Christ in Lebanon, Tennessee and are presently unpacking from a move last month from an apartment to a house in Dowelltown, Tennessee.



The Bartletts are doing well as another year has come and gone. This year is a bit different as **Courtney '03** went from working part time at AIE to a full time position. Robert just celebrated 15 years working for River City Bank and is looking forward to another 15. They are quickly outgrowing their tiny home and hoping to build a new house on their 20 acre farm in the near future. They may even try their hand at raising cattle. At the end of this school year, they will celebrate their daughter Mia's last year in middle school as she graduates from 8th grade. Where has the time gone? Daphne is now in 6th grade and loves that she is almost as tall as her mother. Jackson is in the 4th grade and recently became the proud owner of two baby bearded dragons "Thor" and "Sweetie." Life is busy, but they are so very blessed.

Sarah Woosley '22 just finished her first year at Virginia Military Institute, which is a 4-year military college located in Lexington, Virginia. It was not a traditional college experience and she faced many challenges throughout the year. In addition to her classes, she participated in army ROTC and basic military training. She was physically and mentally pushed, but she survived her first year with a cumulative 3.8 GPA and made the Dean's list both semesters. In addition, she was the only female to make the army ranger challenge team from her class and she hopes to compete at Fort Knox with the team in the fall. She has returned for her 2nd year with a leadership position and is helping to train the incoming cadets. She is contracted with the US Army and will continue to pursue a career in the medical field.



Addison Combs '18 is the Director of Admissions and Marketing for Signature Healthcare of South Louisville. She finally has her own apartment without a roommate and is looking forward to making that her own. Addison, and her dog Sophie, live in the NuLu area of Louisville.



Amy Poe '04 is beginning her 16th year of teaching Preschool at Farmington Elementary School in Graves County, Kentucky. She is married to Nick, who is the Chief Investment Officer at Jennings and Associates, Financial Advisors. They have one daughter, Avery, who is a 3rd grader. Pre-Covid, Nick and Amy completed several triathlons, including an IronMan 70.3. These days, Amy is running long distances, including 2 Disney Half Marathons. Her current plan is to run the Full Marathon at Disney World in January 2024.

Brian Cheek '98 has worked at Youth Villages, a nonprofit serving children and families, for 19 years in November and is currently the Director of Clinical Applications. His wife, Stephanie, is a full-time homemaker and homeschools their three children: Anna, 9; Abigail, 7; and Stephen, 4. They are members of Cornerstone Community Church in Jackson,TN and enjoy spending most of their time with their families and church family.



AIE Breakfast of Excellence

Our second annual Breakfast of Excellence was an exciting day for AIE. Guests from the community were invited to come learn about AIE and what we offer the families we serve. Those in attendance were shown a video, listened to three parents share their experience with AIE, and heard Mr. Savage speak to AIE's mission and vision.

During the breakfast, those in attendance got to meet with several of our students and learn even more about the mission and vision for AIE. Guests were able to hear our students' parents express to them the important part that our school has played in their child's educational journey. The Sponge teachers selected from the many projects our 1st-8th grade students created throughout the year, and Ms. Julie also collected some of the high school contracting projects to display. These works of art were presented by their respective students, who were able to converse with our guests and discuss their work. This added feature to the event certainly opened the eyes of our guests to the creative talents that many of our AIE students possess. That, along with an optional tour at the end of the hour-long event, gave our visitors just a glimpse into the Academy. It was easy to see by the expressions on their faces how much they all enjoyed their time touring the school and learning firsthand about who we are.

During the breakfast, a brief video of "Life at AIE" was shown. The opportunity was then extended to each person to join with AIE in its work; by sharing what they had learned about AIE and also by considering and accepting the challenge of financially giving to our scholarship fund - which provides a child, and their family, an educational home where they belong and can grow. Many of those attending did accept the







Above: Students stand by their showcased artwork and interact with breakfast guests; discussing the journey of their work and their time at AIE.





challenge and several families have already been the recipients of the kindnesses demonstrated and committed to that morning.

Our purpose for the tours, and ultimately the annual Breakfast of Excellence, was not only to give friends, extended family, and community leaders the opportunity to learn about what many call the "best kept secret" in Jeffersontown, but to offer them a way to become an active member of our support team.

If you know of anyone in your circle of friends who might be excited to learn about AIE, please let us know how we can best contact them. Perhaps they, too, might decide to attend one of our monthly tours and then join us for our 3rd annual **AIE Breakfast of Excellence** this spring. Together, we will do great things.

Above: Students from 1st through 4th grade hand out cards they made for the breakfast attendees.

Below and right: Students from Kindergarten through 8th grade surrounded the breakfast attendees in order to showcase their knowledge of rote memorization by reciting the Presidents of the United States, famous works of art and so much more.







Give for Good

By Ally Wroblewski

Two years ago, the Academy started participating in a fun new challenge - Give for Good Louisville, a 24-hour, city-wide, online day of giving to participating non-profits in the area. The event was initially created a decade ago to spark generosity in the community and bring everyone together to support hundreds of organizations! Not knowing what to expect in our first year participating, we were blown away by the support we received from our AIE families, alumni and local community and business members. Our initial goal of \$10,000 was quickly smashed and at the stroke of midnight we ended the challenge by raising over \$18,000 for the AIE Scholarship fund, thanks to over 160 participants! After such an incredible first year, who would have thought that we could possibly top that a second year in a row, but indeed we did! Not only was Give for Good 2022 our best year yet, it was even more fun!

Wanting to make the day a bit more interesting, AIE went above and beyond the challenges created by Give for Good organizers, The Community Foundation of Louisville, to create some of our own fun incentives! Our brave administrative staff stepped up to the plate to help us achieve this. At \$10,000 raised, Ms. Jeanne Mynatt would be sprayed from head to toe in neon silly string, much to the delight of the preschoolers. At \$15,000 Ms. Pam Cheek would receive a delicious whipped cream pie in the face thanks to a very excited Ms. Amanda. At \$20,000 Ms. Julie Dye would get to enjoy a refreshing ice bucket deluge in honor of the high school and lastly at \$25,000 Mr. Savage would get to enjoy all three activities!

The day of Give for Good came, we hit \$10,000, \$15,000 and \$20,000! We knocked last year's total out of the park, but would we hit the magic \$25,000? Midnight came and went with AIE only \$2,000 short of our goal. Mr. Savage thought he had escaped the whipped cream and silly string that awaited him. However, no such luck for him. In a last minute push to reach our goal the following morning, families, students and alumni reached out and donated online - via check, and even some pocket change - to help us hit our \$25,000 goal! Imagine Mr. Savage's surprise when he found it was now his turn to enjoy a silly string surprise, a tasty whipped cream pie in the face, and a nice cool water bucket shower to finish it off with! It was most definitely a day of celebration!



As we get closer to the date, please stay tuned to your email to learn more about how you can make a donation on this special day and invite others to do the same! If you are interested in becoming a fundraiser for this event, or if your company would like to do a matching donation challenge during Give for Good, please contact Mr. Charles Main at cmain@aiexcellence.com. You can also find out more about Give for Good on their website at giveforgoodlouisville.org.





Come Sponge with Us and Soak it All Up

By Jessica Fourman

School tends to revolve around what used to be called, "The Three 'R's:" Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic. Everything in academic pursuits involves those three things. They do not come easy to everyone. Not every child processes the world according to these 3 principles. Vince Gowmon said, "Children do not move, think or speak in a straight line, and neither does imagination nor creativity. But sadly, our standardized pathways of education do." This is exactly why AIE had to think outside the box. Children need more. They need "The Three 'R's" and a great big 'C." CREATIVITY was the missing piece of the puzzle. This is where the Sponge room comes in. When AIE first started, the Sponge room was created as a place for creativity to take shape. It became a place of great significance, a place where students could take a different educational journey than the standardized methods set before them.

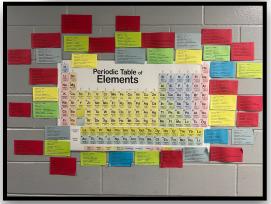
Think - Create - Sponge

AlE's three Sponge rooms are where some of the magic happens, so to speak. Students can soak up knowledge through research, projects, learning new games, experiments, crafts, and so much more. Sponge is a place for students to CHOOSE what they want to learn. It builds upon creativity and imagination. It gives children a safe space to wonder, to experiment, and to explore.







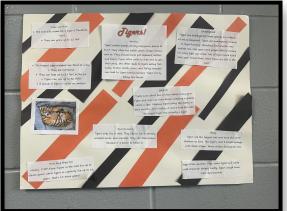




Not to mention, they do all this with mixed ages to incorporate the "family" atmosphere which AIE is designed to emulate—where younger children learn from their older "siblings," big kids get to be needed by the younger ones, and every child has opportunities to inspire and to be inspired. Walk into the Sponge room, any time of day, and you can see a 1st grader learning about horses with a 5th grader, while on the other side of the room a 7th grader is teaching a 3rd grader how to play a new game, and a couple of 2nd graders and 6th graders are working on a project about robots. Working together, these students feel needed, wanted, and valued – they are a crucial piece to the smooth running of the Sponge room. They are inspired by one another and spurred on by one another's curiosity. All it takes is a "what if...?" Jean Vant Hul said, "Children are naturally creative. It is our job to give them the freedom, materials and space to let their creativity blossom to its full potential." That is exactly where the Sponge room comes in. It is a space full of resources and possibilities where the only limit is how far creativity takes you.

In other ways, the Sponge room prepares students for their future in high school. Sponge leads to contracting projects in the high school at AIE - which gives students a leg up in college and the working world. By learning how to ask questions, form plans, and develop tasks, students are better prepared for their contracting projects. They are prepared and able to confidently contract knowing they have the creativity assignments in the bag. Oftentimes, the greatest roadblock to a successful project or essay is simply knowing how to begin. Without knowing where to start, projects can seem daunting and overwhelming right from the get-go. In Sponge, they learn to start with a question: What if? Why is that? How does that work? Can I do it, too?... and from these questions, the buds of curiosity bloom into meaningful works of creativity. They have purpose with their work, they have value, they have access to help in so many forms, they are guided, they are free, but they are given safe boundaries.











Importance of Creativity

- It broadens our perspectives.
- It lets us explore our potential.
- It helps us identify problem areas and improve upon them.
- It gives us the power to grow; mentally, analytically, emotionally, and critically.
- It allows you to problem solve.
- It helps you to overcome prejudices.
- It invokes both the artistic and the analytical.
- It combats stagnation and boredom.
- It facilitates innovation.
- It gives you the tools to battle uncertainty.



So, not only does Sponge prepare a student for high school, but it also prepares the individual for life. When hiring a new applicant, who wouldn't want to hire someone with attack skills, problem solving abilities, critical thinking skills, a passion for innovation and growth, a desire to succeed and the potential to face an uncertain future with a determined confidence?

The Sponge room is one of AIE's greatest assets; a place where creativity changes lives!













Keira McGill Wins TARC 23rd Annual DESIGN-A-BUS Contest

By Renee Hale

Our very own 5th grader, Miss Keira McGill, was one of twelve students who won TARC's Annual Design-A-Bus Contest this past spring. She is the daughter of Garrett and Kasey McGill. Her siblings are Chandler and Moira, who attend AIE as well. Mr. Garrett is one of our Sponge room teachers. So, it's not surprising that Keira is quite an artist like her dad.

The Louisville Free Public Library partnered with TARC this year. The art contest's theme was, "Every Journey, a Story." Student artists reflected on a personal journey where they learned something new or expanded their knowledge. Then, they drew an illustration of their reflection.

Twelve winners were picked from participating counties: Jefferson, Oldham, and Bullitt in Kentucky and Floyd and Clark in Southern Indiana. They ranged in age from elementary to high school students. Their artwork has been featured on a TARC bus that was in the 2023 Pegasus Parade. Each winner was invited to ride on it during the parade. I was super excited to see Keira and her dad in the parade!

Congratulations, Keira!





TARC (ART BUS) is still on Route 28 (Preston Highway)
"While driving on Preston Highway, look for TARC Bus #28."







Ms. Renee is one of our 3rd/4th grade teachers.

Officially Retired

A look back at Ms. Sheri's time at AIE

If you have ever arrived at AIE early in the morning, one of the first faces you might have seen was Sheri Sexton. You'd be graced with a smile, a happy good morning, and maybe a quick word or two about family, gardening, or anything in between. Throughout the day, you could count on hearing her with her 1st and 2nd graders. She was a constant and kind mother-figure they could count on to make them feel safe and encourage them to be themselves. Now, she takes a new step on her journey, one into retirement. While those of us at AIE will miss seeing her walking the halls with her cup of tea, we are all thankful for what she brought



to our lives and happy to see her embarking on this next phase of her life. We took some time to ask some of those who have worked alongside her about what this journey has been like. Teresa Savage gave us some starting facts about Sheri's time at AIE, and some well wishes to send her on this journey, "Sheri Sexton and her husband, Rick, joined the AIE family in 2001. She has been a loyal friend and dedicated teacher to John and I. Her faith, her sweet spirit, her hugs, and her smiles have uplifted many a staff member and student over the years. She will definitely be missed, but we are excited to hear about her new adventures in retirement."

Before we see what others have to say, let's see what Sheri has to say for herself...

"Oh my goodness! I'm a boring subject! Some of my favorite memories are some of the many special children I've worked with over the 22 years I've been at AIE. There are always those that touch your heart in a way you can never forget them. I still think of several and wonder where they are and what they're doing now as adults. Being able to ride to and from work, with my best friend and husband, every day was an added bonus. Having my daughter, Tiffany, work there, and my daughter, Meagan, graduate from there, and having three of my five grandchildren there for periods of time, was so special. I remember I was terrified of Pam Cheek when I started, but fell in love with watching her with the children and the way she served us as a staff member. I have worked with so many wonderful people over the years at AIE and have developed many friendships that I hope will continue. Most of all, I



want to thank John and Teresa for the opportunity to work in such a "FANTABULOUS" (one of my Dad's words) place, learning & growing as a teacher and a person. I feel so very blessed and I keep telling them, "you never know, I may knock on your door asking for another job someday." That seems to happen a lot at the Academy, because it's a wonderful place full of wonderful people."

Sheri's husband, Rick Sexton said, "It has been a joy working together for the last 22 years here at the Academy. I think Sheri has been a blessing to the students, families, and faculty. She is looking forward to having time to do some new things, as well as spend time doing things she enjoys: like reading, crocheting and spending more time with family."

Pam Cheek has perhaps worked with Sheri the longest and had this to say about her, "What a blessing it has been to know Sheri Sexton! For many years, she has been right next door. I was always so impressed with the kids that came to my room after being with Miss Sheri. She had them well prepared. She and Rick were early arrivers, like me, so we often took a few minutes to catch up on our kids and grandkids in the mornings. Miss Sheri will be missed by us all, but I know she will enjoy her retirement. I hear she is already busy!"

Theresa Dutschke had the pleasure of working alongside Sheri for a year before taking on her role in the 1st/2nd grade classroom. She said, "The first thing that comes to mind is that all kids would quote her as saying "be kind." She was very patient with all the kids and you could tell she loved them all as her own. She is also very encouraging and reassuring. I am going to miss working alongside her."



Both Amanda Williams and Courtney Bartlett had children who thrived under Sheri's leadership, while also working beside her in different capacities over the years. "Ms. Sheri is a special person. She taught all three of my children, and they loved her. She was a part of their lives since they were born. I can remember handing them to her when I was leading Rote, and she would walk them in the halls. Lyla grew to love her, but screamed everyday when I handed her off, so I could teach. Lyla's comment to me was, "I didn't like



her when I was a baby but I loved her as a teacher!" HA! She loved her students and they knew she cared. The past few years, Ms. Sheri has meant more to me than she will ever realize. She gave me support and encouragement when I needed it. She made sure I knew I was appreciated and always found a way to lift me up when I needed it the most. She always had a way of recognizing when I needed a boost and made sure that I knew I was important to AIE. There are only a handful of teachers that have been at the school the entire time I've been teaching, and she is one of them. I will miss seeing her face in Rote each morning. She was a source of strength for me each day, and she will be missed dearly." – Amanda Williams

"I have been lucky enough to know Ms. Sheri for over 20 years. She was a teacher at AIE before I graduated, but it wasn't until I came back, to be employed at AIE, that I realized the support she would be for me and the impact she would make on my life. Each morning, Ms. Sheri was at the front desk when I came to work, and she never left the office without our morning hug. If you know me, hugs are very important, and Ms. Sheri always had the best hugs. Ms. Sheri was also someone I could count on to uplift me spiritually. We all have tough days and I knew that she would be there to remind me that God is in control and that trusting His plan would get me through the hard times. On those difficult days, I found myself looking for her because I knew she would make me feel better. Ms. Sheri has been a big part of my life, on both a personal level and as a parent. She taught all three of my children through their 1st and 2nd grade years at AIE, and they loved having her as their teacher. She always had a morning hug for them, kind words, and encouraged them to be their individual best. They loved her, and she loved them. What more could I have asked for? She was a big part of AIE for so many years and she will be missed as a teacher, a co-worker, and a friend. We love you, Ms. Sheri!" – Courtney Bartlett

To wrap it up, we will close this book with some words from Mr. Savage...

"One of the best smiles and positive spirits left the building as we said goodbye to Ms. Sheri Sexton. Ms. Sheri made many a long day a bit shorter with her smile, and a quick comment of support for the work we do here at AIE. After 22 years of service to AIE, she decided to take a break from the daily routine of teaching. She will now find a bit more time to do some relaxed visiting with her family, enjoying her cat, waving goodbye to Mr. Sexton in the morning, and welcoming him home at the end of the day. I am sure it will be strange, at first, as the Sexton's have traveled to, and from, school together for the past 22 years. They are early risers, which meant they were here before most of us. If you didn't see their car in the parking lot when you pulled in, or Sheri at the front desk greeting those students and staff arriving early, you knew something was up. Sheri was usually the first one to say thank you, or to ask "What can I do better?" She often asked for help, or if she could help. She truly worked diligently to possess and demonstrate a kind and gentle heart to all of us. She will be missed."

The Dramatic Paws

Lights! Curtains! Action! This year, the high school put on two amazing plays with the direction of 1st year English teacher, Ms. Alyssa Music, veteran AIE English teacher, Mr. Mike Robertson, and veteran AIE Music teacher, Ms. Jackie Shamblen. Students and staff worked together to design and create remarkable sets that left the audience immersed in the performances - not to mention, some very elaborate costume designs that helped bring the characters to life.

In the fall, the senior class put on an amazing rendition of one of their past times: "High School Musical Jr." In the spring, the high school brought us "The Princess Who Had No Name."









A Day with the Pacers

By Amanda Williams

For quite a few years, the AIE Varsity boys and girls basketball teams have been given the opportunity to play at the Indiana Pacers Stadium each season. The past couple years our teams have missed the opportunity due to Covid and bad weather, but, this year we were invited back. The Varsity teams traveled to Indianapolis one Friday in January, where they played against Bethel Christian, a team in the KCAA. We had over 200 fans attend this event. The experience was unique. Not many kids can say they have played on an NBA court. After the games were played, we had a few hours to eat and visit before we returned to watch the Pacers play against the Atlanta Hawks. It was a fun bonding time for both players, families, and fans - one we intend to take part in again this year.







Fall at AIE



Above: Fall Festival brought hay rides driven by Mr. Savage, a petting zoo, cake walk, inflatables, and games galore - not to mention some very tasty chili, and hot dogs.











Left: Students enjoy a
Thanksgiving lunch, "family style,"
where they dress up and sit with
their classmates, in tables
decorated with placemats, and
eat some good fixin's served by
our senior students.

AIE Scholarship Auction

We had a packed house November 5th for our annual Scholarship Auction. Everyone participated to make it the best one yet. Between sponsorships, donations, ticket sales and the live and silent auction, we brought in over \$90,000! This year we far exceeded previous years and made it possible for even more families to send their

children to AIE.



Other items auctioned include:

Get a pass to the "Front of the Carpool Line" for an entire year!

Let your child experience being "Principal for the Day"

Own a "Reserved Parking Space" close to the door

Sporting Event Tickets

A week at a beach house – Oak Island, NC

A week at a lake house at Lake Barkley

and much, much, more!



The auction included such baskets as: Stocking Stuffers

The Giving Tree (Gift Card Baskets)

O Christmas Tree (Homemade ornaments and Christmas toys)

Gardening Goodies & Gadgets

Squishy Squashy Squishmallow

"AIE Top Chef" 2022 (Baking/Cooking)

Welcome to our Farmhouse (Farmhouse Decorations)

Pumpkin Kisses and Harvest Wishes (Fall/Thanksgiving)

The Book Nook (For those that love to read!)

A Farmhouse Christmas

The Great Outdoors (Outdoor Games/Activities)

Rags to Riches (How many coins can we collect?)

Family Game Night

Level Up! (Gaming and more)





Santa Breakfast

Santa Breakfast was back this year! We were thrilled to enjoy a morning of fun holiday activities with our students and, later in the week, Christmas caroling together as a school family. It was such a joy to see the smiles on everyone's faces as we started off Christmas break in the holly jolly spirit!





Kentucky Colonels Music Lab Funding

This year, thanks to the Kentucky Colonels Good Works Program, AIE was awarded grant funding to purchase equipment for two new Music Lab stations and to replace some of our musical instruments with newer pieces.

Medieval Fair

Fifth and sixth grade put on a medieval fair for kindergarten through eighth grade. Students walked through various rooms to see medieval costumes, presentations, demonstrations and more.



















Mounted Patrol



One of the highlights of Spring Fling was the appearance of the LMPD Mounted Patrol. Our very own Brandon Savage, and his fellow officers, shared the love of their mounts with us. Children were able to come in close contact with the horses and hear what mounted patrol life is like. Thank you, officers, for such a great day, and showing such patience and grace with all our questions!

Senior Parent Dinner

Every year in May - two days before Senior graduation - the seniors, their parents, and many of the faculty and staff at AIE meet at Claudia Sanders Dinner House for dinner and a time of reflection. Students and parents are invited to speak and to share their thoughts on their time at AIE. As the seniors come to terms with the fact that their journey is ending with us, many tears are shed. It is always a night we look forward to and one we will never forget.



Junior/ Senior Night

Every April, the Juniors and Seniors get all dressed up to attend Jr/Sr Night. This is a night they look forward to all year long. The shuttles transported us downtown to the Hyatt Regency and we made our way to the top for an elegant dinner and a spectacular view of the city! After dinner, we headed back to school to change clothes, eat ice cream sundaes and play basketball, volleyball and other games. At midnight we checked into the Main Event for three hours of bowling, laser tag, arcade games, ropes course, and all the pizza you can eat! It was a memorable night!



Field Trips

Field Trips are a special highlight of the year, for both students and staff - and one we have been happy to embrace after the Covid pandemic delayed so many of our activities.



This year, Kindergarten students embarked on their annual trip to the Farm. They were able to experience not only Mr. and Mrs. Savage's farm, but also the animals of some other family farms, as well.

First and Second grade took a trip to Gallrein Farms to pick pumpkins, climb hay bales, and take a hay ride.



Third and Fourth grade took a trip to the Kentucky Horse Park right in the middle of Derby season. They saw horse training in action, visited the stables, and had fun learning about horse racing history.



Fifth and Sixth grade traveled back in time with a trip to Squire Boone. While there, some of them dipped their own candles, learned how to make lye soap, and trekked through some caverns.

Seventh and Eighth graders went under the sea with a trip to the Newport Aquarium. They got up close and personal with a few aquatic animals, and walked over a bridge of shark infested waters.





High School Trip

The day after Derby, 94 students, staff and parents left for the 2023 AIE High School Trip. The group stopped at the Hermitage Farm in Nashville and traveled to New Orleans to visit the Riverwalk and Mardi Gras World, and go on a Swamp Tour. Many stops were made in Texas to see the Johnson Space Center, the Alamo in San Antonio, the Silo's in Waco and a guided tour of Dallas. The Medieval Times Dinner Theatre got everyone cheering and pizza and bowling night is always a favorite. The last stop was at Graceland in Memphis. It was a week filled with bits of history of our country, bingo, games and karaoke on the bus, and memories to last a lifetime!





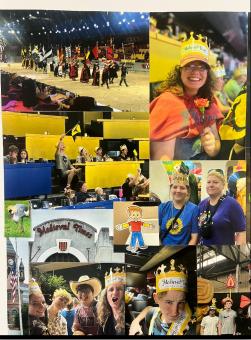


AIE High School Trip 2023

Hermitage Farm- Nashville, TN
New Orleans Riverwalk
Mardi Gras World
Jean Lafitte Swamp Tour
Johnson Space Center- Houston, TX
Alamo- San Antonio, TX
Imax- "The Price of Freedom"
Go Rio River Cruise
Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch Tour
Magnolia Market- Silo's at Waco, TX
Medieval Times Dinner Theatre
Farmer's Market- Dallas, TX
Graceland- Memphis, TN

Academy for Individual Excellence





Drew Wrightsel

By Victoria Heep

When Drew Wrightsel (class of 2023) was a toddler, he had what his parents considered an extraordinary amount of energy. Like most, they sought out a way for him to expand that energy. He bounced among several sports, however, gymnastics just seemed to stick out to him.

Gymnastics has proven to be a significant part of Drew's life in many ways. He spends five days a week practicing with his coach and teammates. Each practice will last 3-4 hours. It has taught him to "trust the process." Everything he does in gymnastics is a process. Throughout his competitive career, he has made lifelong friends. His teammates are considered family.

Drew competes for Sigs Sportsplex, just across the bridge in New Albany. His team consists of 26 guys, 15 of which are optional gymnasts competing at the highest level of competition. He says he loves the competitive environment because it motivates him to do more.

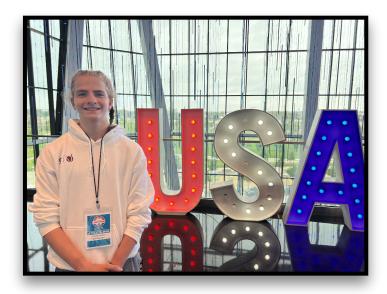
His hard work has paid off. His proudest accomplishment was making it to nationals two years in a row. He has accomplished this by surpassing the necessary scores and being hand picked in the selection process. Every competition he goes into anxiously. Yet, it's the anxiety that gives him the necessary adrenaline, making him strive to compete to the best of his abilities.

With competitions, like most things in life, there have been a few moments to look back on and laugh a little. A few years ago, Drew had a large flight meet in Fort Worth, Texas. He got all the way to the competition on the rings and realized he had forgotten his rings grips. He had to try and compete with his high bar grips instead. Although it wasn't an easy task, he managed to get through it very well.

Following the last competition in Oklahoma City, Drew's gymnastic career will take a short recess. This year, he plans to focus on his studies at UK. Afterwards, he will rejoin the gymnastics community as a coach in Lexington. Many will benefit from his experience and the wisdom that he can share.

Drew says, "The sport is amazing. When you fail, don't give up. Failure is a part of the process to succeed."

Congratulations Drew. Don't forget to keep in touch!





Girls' Basketball

By Coach Brad Schilling

The season was a season full of potential, but also full of unknowns. We knew we had lost a lot of experience from the previous year, and neither Ms. Amanda or I knew how the girls would handle the change. We had a nice blend of returning girls, as well as some new additions. We were a young team overall, but we had some athletic potential. We were cautiously optimistic about the aptitude of our team, while trying to not get too far ahead of ourselves.

We had a Junior Varsity (JV) team for the first time in many years, and this was important in the growth of our younger players. We were a JV team that had no sophomores, but had a nice blend of experience and athleticism. The team grew and developed amazing chemistry. Their only loss in the regular season was a close game to Oak Ridge, who were two-time defending champions. In the JV tournament, they did amazing, and finished as runner ups to Oak Ridge in a very close game. The future is bright for these young girls.

Our varsity season kicked off during the Holiday Classic tournament. The majority of the league was at the tournament. It didn't start off great with a loss to Heritage, but we rebounded well and finished with two dominant wins. The season for the Varsity built upon those two wins and had a very strong regular season. The only losses came from Oak Ridge and a surprising loss to Lakeside at the end of the year.

The Lakeside loss was one of the most demoralizing games of the season, but turned out to be a positive turning point. The girls, and the coaches, were pretty dejected, as we had very few setbacks like this one during the season. However, Ms. Amanda used a college football analogy to show that a loss in the regular season where you learn and grow from it, can sometimes be the springboard into a successful post season. Ms. Amanda and I









realized we had let some of the successes get into our heads, and our expectations for the season had taken some of the fun out of enjoying the game. We both agreed at the next practice that we were going to make it about finding the joy in the game again, and not worry about the wins and losses. We wanted to play the best games we could, and not worry about the rest.

This really seemed to relax the girls, and it was obvious in their play. They were back to working hard and giving their best efforts, and while we all wanted to win, the girls were having fun again. It also allowed us coaches to be better cheerleaders and do our best to focus on the things they were doing right. We made it to the semi-finals of the Regional Tournament. We were facing Heritage again, but our girls came out and played their best game of the season. Our girls were aggressive and made every adjustment we asked of them. It was an amazing win! We faced Oak Ridge in the Regional Final, and played an even better game. We lost by a last second shot but was guaranteed a #2 seed entering the State Tournament. This game gave the girls a lot of confidence moving forward.

We were lucky in our draw, not because we faced easier teams, but we had developed relationships and bonds with all of the girls on our side of the bracket. It made it easy to just enjoy the game. Even the referees were impressed with how friendly all of the girls were with each other. We won our first game putting us into the Championship game against Oak Ridge. We tried to stress to the girls how much of an accomplishment this was and to just enjoy the moment. Playing in the Championship game was a special moment that we wanted to make sure they all enjoyed. The girls played an amazing game. They fought back from a big deficit to pull within a one possession game with under a minute to play. Unfortunately, Oak Ridge was able to pull out a few good plays to seal the win, but we couldn't be prouder of our team.

It was such a successful season, and not just because of being Runner Up. It was because of the bond and relationships that were developed. Our girls represented our school on the court, but most importantly off the court. We couldn't be prouder of our team!





Coach Schilling is not only the high school girls' basketball coach, but also a high school math teacher at AIE.



Boys' Basketball

By Coach Paul Music

The AIE Boys Basketball team had an exciting season. Not only did these boys show effort, strength, courage, leadership, and respect, they also had to work with a brand-new face to the program. When hired on as the AIE Boys Basketball Coach, I knew there would be challenges ahead. The school's program, the faculty's support, and the students' willingness and eagerness to tackle the challenge with someone they never met was the best acceptance anyone could ask for.

The Junior Varsity team ended their season with a 6-7 record and, although that may seem like a tough outcome, these boys made every win matter. They took the courts with excitement and determination. The losses we walked away from we took to the next games, and you were able to witness that not only in practice, but at home. These boys were focused on wanting to become better and better every day. The lessons we learned, and the frustrations we experienced together, will give them the drive to excel on the court next season.

The Varsity team set the bar high at the beginning of the season. They were eager to show their talents, their strengths, and even their relationship with each other, knowing that no matter what, they could trust one another. The Varsity team trucked through with a record of 10-11 at the end of the season. Even though there were losses, they were made with understanding and acceptance of knowing what we needed to fix. I will never forget, when playing the Tip-Off Tournament and losing to Oak Ridge by only 5 points, I was approached by two seniors saying, "These are tough teams coach, but we were close. We'll get them next time!" Not only did they give 110% on the court, but they also rose to the occasion and built up.

As we enter the '23-'24 basketball season, the





Cougars will be a force to be reckoned with, both JV and Varsity. Now, I say this with a heavy heart, when entering this next season I will be unable to continue as the boys coach as I will be fulfilling military obligations. However, make no mistake, that when the boys and girls basketball teams take the courts, the teams within the KCAA will hear the roar of the Cougars and tremble with fear. The school, the faculty, the students, and the players themselves know this is going to be a great season. This is for the boys and girls playing this season; Remember to keep your head up and to stay on your man... unless you're on offense then get open. Go Cougars!!

Paul Music is the high school boys' basketball coach and teaches 7th/8th grade.

Middle School Basketball

By Coaches Matthew and Morgan Andrews

We had a great year of middle school basketball at AIE! When we initially get our players for the year, we have a practice to see where everyone's skill level is and how we can help each player grow individually. Some have experience and some have none, so it can be a challenging task, but also a very rewarding task as both the coaches and the players cheer each other on for the successes that occur throughout the season. More importantly than growing in skill, though, we also try to develop our players as good humans. Within the first few practices, we have a team meeting about what it means to be an athlete at AIE. We discuss team work, work ethic, building each other up, not comparing ourselves, and much more. These attributes are things that we discuss with our players throughout the entire season, both in practices and in the games. Another purpose of our basketball team at this age is to really teach the players the basics and to build the foundation of what they will need when they enter high school. We had some players with height, some who could dribble well, and some really great defenders this year, so we had many skill sets that we were able to take and further develop. The team worked well together and had many wins! We also had a large scrimmage team this year of many players that were new to the game of basketball. Each one made great progress and we were very proud of all of the work that they put in to their individual growth. We loved every minute of coaching this year and can't wait to see what the next season brings!



Softball

By Coach Jennifer Woosley

Our softball team competed in the KCAA for our 9th season, with David Adamczyk and Rob Cundiff returning to assist in coaching, along with Becca Woosley and Joanne Adamczyk (class of '18) helping! This team had high expectations placed upon them after winning the state championship last year, and we began the season knowing we needed a new starting pitcher. Once again, the girls rose to the challenge!

With the core team returning and a few of the younger players working on pitching before the season started, we were able to field a competitive team. We finished regular season play with a 3-3 league record and earned the #2 seed going into the state tournament, where we faced Cornerstone Christian Academy in the first round. We won the game, finishing after just 5 innings of play and returned the next day to play Heritage Christian Academy for the championship. That game was extremely difficult as the weather was unseasonably hot for the first of June and we were facing a more experienced team. Our girls battled all the way until the end but came up short. Molly Cundiff (senior catcher) and Jocelyn Davis (freshman pitcher) played their best games of the season and were both named to the All-State tournament team.

Finishing 2nd place is still quite an accomplishment and we were all very proud of the girls! They represented our school well and earned a 2nd banner that will be hung to commemorate their achievement! And with a young team and most of the girls returning, we look forward to competing again next year!





Ms. Jennifer is the softball coach and biology teacher at AIE.



Soccer

By Coach Matthew Andrews

What a year for AIE soccer! Coach Charles retired last year after leading the Cougars to two straight semi finals! He still comes to cheer them on when he can and they love seeing their past coach at the games. Joe Abbott stepped in as the head coach and with years of past soccer experience, he and Matthew Andrews led the Cougars this year to a season of 6 wins, 1 loss, and 2 tied games, with AIE placing second in the KCAA. In 2021, Heritage Christian Academy had sent us home in the semi finals. We met them again in the tournament this year, but we were ready to take them on, with many of our players having grown in skill. Both teams had amazing defense, with the game ending 1-1, meaning that PKs would decide the fate of AIE continuing in the tournament. This may have been one of the most exciting soccer games AIE has had in recent years and so many fans were there to cheer us on. We came out victorious with a final score of 5-3, as Dan Savage, our only senior and goalie, made two amazing stops against Heritage's shots.

One of the best parts of the game, though, was how our players humbly embraced the opposing team as friends with hugs and handshakes, letting them know that they too had a great game. The opposing coaches and players both commented on our sportsmanship and how much they appreciated our attitudes. Both in victories and losses, we want to represent godliness in our character on and off the field. The championship game ended with a 2-0 loss to Assumption but we gave it our best and finished our season, bringing home a banner as the runner up. We only lost one starter last year, and this season is off to a great start with several seniors. We know we will continue to work hard, represent ourselves and our school well. Winning that championship would just be icing on the cake. We appreciate all the support this year! Go Cougars!





Baseball

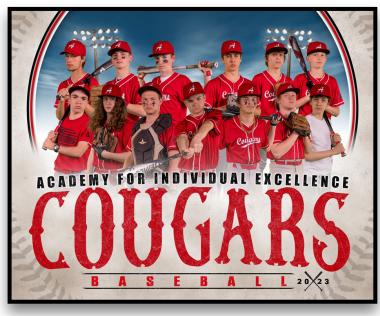
By Coach Brandon Kessler

Although the 2023 Cougar Baseball season didn't go quite as expected, we were still able to compete and keep improving practice by practice, game by game.

We only had two seniors this season: John Phelps and Daniel Savage. John provided solid pitching as our top pitcher, all season long. Daniel's leadership and defense were unmatched in our conference. Both will be sorely missed.

Incoming player Cayden Brown played very well all season long, making the tough transition from center field to shortstop. The best catcher in the league for the past two seasons, Braden Williams, and Luke Pierce were both huge contributors, as well. Micah Sooter had the tough challenge of learning to play shortstop and becoming our number 2 starting pitcher, and his effort/improvement was awesome all season long. Jadon Savage was a very important utility player on the infield for us, starting at several infield spots. Eighth grader, Alex Kaelin, had a phenomenal first high school season for us and his pitching was integral. Much will be expected of him over the next four seasons. James McArthur and Wyatt Mitchum were both solid first year players as well, and both played well in the outfield. Next season's team looks to be very much improved with many returning 2-3 year starters. With some key additions, we could have a big 2024 season! Thanks to all who supported us throughout the season. You truly don't understand how much that means and helps our team. See ya next season!





Archery

We had a wonderful group of 38 students from 6th grade through 12th grade on our archery team. We started the season's first practice on October 15th and ended March 9th. During this time, our team competed in 13 tournaments around Louisville, hosted one exhibition shoot at AIE and one mock-tournament at AIE. We celebrated our archery season on April 15th at AIE with a catered lunch and a "fun shoot" for the archers and their families. We recognized top archers at this luncheon as well as rewarded all archers for a fantastic season! The dedication it takes a student to arrive at school at 7 am on a school day for practice is note-worthy, especially for 5+months! In addition to practice, most archers on the team dedicated nearly every Saturday to tournaments since January 20th (14 tournaments in all!). New archers, and old, all had the opportunity to compete as a team this season with virtually every archer beating their "personal best" score.

Highlights of the year are as follows:

- ·Highest scoring tournament: 2984 High Score Crosby Cougars 10 Meter Tune-up
- ·Second place team: Shawnee 1st Annual Golden Eagle Archery Tournament
- ·Donuts and "personal best" snack awards at practice!

Huge shout-out to two archers who shot a perfect 50 points during a tournament:

- ·Brennan Forrest-Wallen 50
- ·Brice Gayheart 50 1st place boys KCAA (Kentucky Christian Athletic Association) State Tournament

Special thanks go to AIE for providing the team updated archery uniforms, new arrows, and practice equipment. Thanks also goes out to the Gayheart family for making new arrow holders for practice and to Nancy Cox for applying the AIE logos on the holders. Nancy has been a huge help volunteering to facilitate many administrative tasks for the team as well as Suzanne Farnan-Maddux who was lead coordinator for our tournament sign-ups.

Our coaching staff this year was Tony and Kate Blough, Suzanne Farnan-Maddux and Jason Finley. We have been proud of the AIE archery team and honored to be their coaches! We look forward to seeing what next year has in store.

"Go Cougars!"







Bowling

By Misty Harmon

This year's bowling team scored a perfect strike when it comes to what AIE is all about.

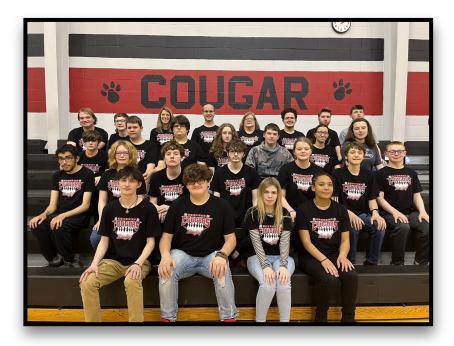
After taking a break for a couple years due to the pandemic, the AIE bowling team returns thanks to Ms. Victoria, who saw a need and stepped in. Although years of Ms. Kathy's wonderful dedication to coaching the bowling team seemed like big shoes to fill, Ms. Victoria knew what a great opportunity this would be for her students...and she was right!

Re-beginning in the fall, the bowlers were excited and ready to put on their bowling shoes. Ms. Victoria, who was assisted by Mr. Paul and Ms. Misty, found herself surrounded by students who were as eager to bowl as they were to be a part of a team.

As the season unfolded, the high schoolers, ranging from freshman to seniors, began to improve. Their scores reflected how willing they were to take advice and learn from one another. Three of the bowlers, who bowl in leagues outside of school, were exceptionally helpful. Nick Hauck, a senior, who scored 200 or more in many games, kept his humble approach while offering help to others. TJ Carroll, a junior, who also scored around 200 for many games, offered his advice and encouragement to his teammates. And, Janelle Alexander, a sophomore, who bowls for Special Olympics Kentucky, made sure to congratulate and hi-five everyone around her. But the list of the students who made sure bowling was fun for everyone goes on and on.

"It is so neat to see how supportive they are towards one another," said Laura Felty, Jack's Mom. That's the takeaway. It wasn't necessarily the improved skills or scores, or even the fact that nearly half of the bowlers made it into the "Over 100 Club," it all came down to building each other up. From a teacher seeing a need and stepping in to serve, to students who cared as much about encouraging their teammates as their own scores, the engagement and compassion of our AIE family was clear to see.





Volleyball

By Coach Julie Dye

The 2022 Cougar Volleyball season looked different (in a good way) than it has for the past couple of years. Most all KCAA schools fielded teams this year, so we were able to play a regular season for JV and Varsity. The development of our Intramural program allowed our JV team to get a good foundation. This year's IV team was comprised of 6th -10th graders, all of which played on the varsity team as well. Their regular season record was 8-4, and included a trip to the KCAA State Tournament. Our varsity team was led by senior Hayden Lawson, in her 5th year on the team, and 2nd year as team captain, and was joined by senior Kayla Brown, for her 2nd season. New to the team and to the Academy, we were pleased to welcome senior Nevaeha Graves. The varsity team worked hard, supported each other, made tremendous progress, gave their best, and represented the Academy well. Nearly every opponent (their players, coaches, parents, and/or administration) commented on how much we had developed as a team since last time they played us, evidenced by so many close sets and 3 set games. What was ultimately even better to hear were the opposing teams' comments (whether that team won or lost) regarding how much they enjoy playing our team, how hard our girls play, how nice they are, how much they smile, and how excited they get for each other. We are already looking forward to the 2023 season!







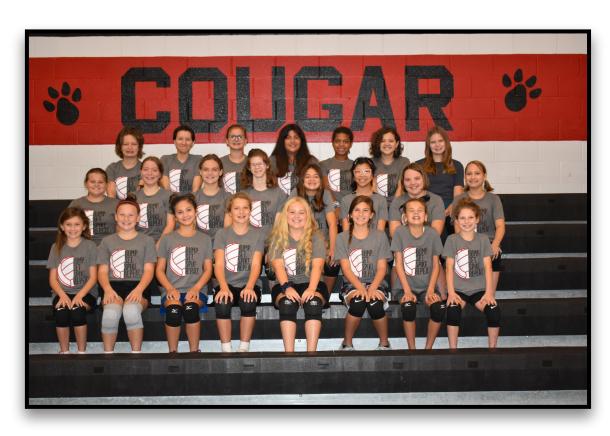


Ms. Julie Dye is not only the volleyball coach, but she is a teacher and the Dean of the high school.

Intramural Volleyball

By Courtney Bartlett

This year, we decided to start an AIE intramural volleyball team. We made the team available to girls from 5th grade all the way through 12th grade. The team consisted of 23 players this year; under the tutelage of parent and staff members, Courtney Savage Bartlett ('03) and Robert, Susan and Tim Thieneman, and Amber Phillips Hutchinson ('04). These girls enjoyed learning a new sport as well as what it felt like to practice and play with a team. The intramural team allows for the opportunity to play a sport without the time and travel commitment of playing competitively. Many of our girls have now expressed an interest in moving to the Cougar Volleyball team in the future. In our practices we focus on the basic skills of volleyball: bumping, setting, serving, moving, and most importantly, communicating. About half the girls plan to stay on the intramural team next year while the other half will be looking to advance to the Cougar Volleyball team as they become eligible to play competitively. I definitely feel like introducing volleyball to these girls early will increase their interest in playing on our Cougar Volleyball team down the road. More importantly, it helps by engaging them in team building activities where they are asked to work together, rely on one another and build each other up. I really enjoyed coaching these girls, along with the other coaches this year, and look forward to doing it again next year.



Cross Country - Running with the Cougars

By Jackie Shamblen

The Cougar Cross Country Team had a remarkable year. While running through our KCAA schedule, our students each marked a new personal best in their times before the season came to a close. AIE also was well represented at the KCAA State Cross Country Meet in Independence, KY. Aryana Reyes did an outstanding job, and took 2nd place in High School Girls Varsity. We look forward to next racing season, and hope to continue to grow both our running group and cross country competitors. As the weather gets warmer, we are looking ahead to the possibility of some training opportunities and fun runs as we prepare for the next cross country season.











Ms. Jackie is also the music teacher₄₅ at AIE.

Congratulations to our Graduates





Above: (Left) Kindergarten Graduates (Right) 8th Grade Graduates

Senior Graduates

Caroline Rogers, AJ Clark, Nick Hauck, Alex Marquez, Anton Thieneman, Hayden Lawson

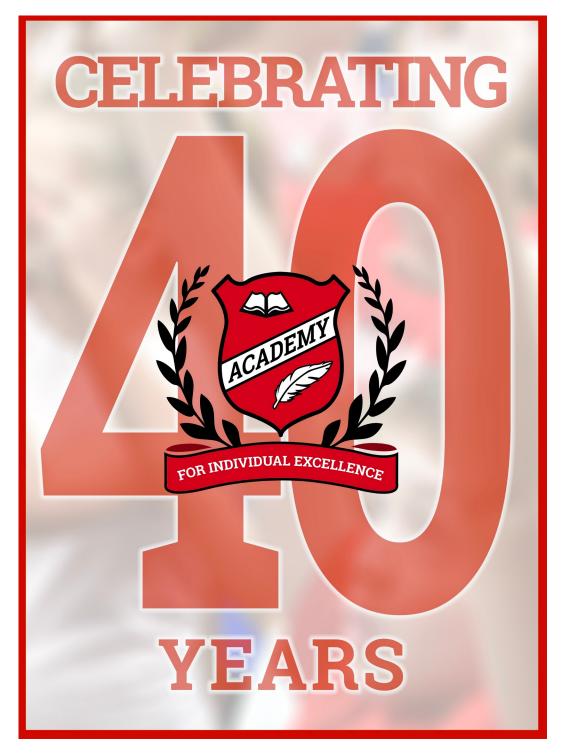
Amelia Hagan, Chris Moore, John Phelps, Dan Savage, Daniel Woods, Courtney Albert

Kayla Brown, Drew Wrightsel, Jack Felty, Nevaeha Graves

Turner Steele, Jalen Gosling, Jacob Hess, Molly Cundiff

Brooke Byers, James Williams, Shane Tucker, Jack Langford, Joseph Todd, Fallon Cross

Junior McAntoine, Parker Burton, Tyler Aarvig, Zach Riley, Tristin Webb, Kyle Catchpole



Coming Next Year ...

On June 11, 2024, AIE celebrates 40 years of learning, love, and changing lives!

If you have any old pictures or stories of your time at AIE over the years, please share your memories with us.

Send any stories or pictures to cougartracks@aiexcellence.com, or drop them off at AIE.

Be ready to take a trip down memory lane in next year's edition of Cougar Tracks.





Molly is looking forward to seeing you soon!